

March 22, 1984

LB 1127

myself for eloquence, for style, for whatever it takes to open your hearts and your minds to do what I think is right by the children in this state. LB 1127 is a bill that if passed in its current form will adversely affect the sick poor, in our state. I say before we pass the bill in its current form, let's take care of one little problem that twenty-one other jurisdictions in our country have taken care of and that is to extend Medicaid coverage to sick children in needy two-parent families. I say, let's do that not necessarily as an act of charity, as an act of mercy, as an act of kindness, but rather, but rather out of those humanitarian impulses that motivate every last one of us as legislators and as citizens of Nebraska. There is something that we cannot do. We cannot allow a child who is born to a poor family, who is born to a poor family to grow up without essential medical care because to the extent that we allow that to be done, we tolerate suffering in a little child; to the extent that we allow that to be done, we are prepared ultimately to pay the price through our Crippled Children's Services Program, through our retardation programs, and through our institutional care programs. To the extent that we don't take the time and invest the small amount of money required to give every child in our society an equal chance, an equal chance to grow up in health, you and I fail. We absolutely fail. And that is something that we should not continence nor permit. This is a small amendment. This amendment, if passed, will cost the state \$1,050,000 next year, and the federal government \$1.4 million next year for a total price tag of \$2.5 million to make certain that the little children in our society who have the misfortune of growing up in an impoverished household will at least have access to medical services. And what will that access bring? If a child goes in to a doctor's office for the checkup that is allowable under the Medicaid program and if that doctor's office discovers that that child has a hearing problem, that hearing problem can be rectified now so that that child will not spend his first two or three years in school not hearing all the words of the teacher, not being well educated and ultimately becoming disaffected with schooling and dropping out. And you know the price of that Early Periodic Diagnostic Screening and Testing program is \$20. \$20. That is about the price that a lobbyist pays